

# THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

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## EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

### NEW DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

From *School and Society* for August 10  
Is taken the following statement about degree requirements, as announced by George Oscar Ferguson, Jr., dean of the college at the University of Virginia:

The University of Virginia has recently adopted new requirements for the degrees of bachelor of arts and bachelor of science, to take effect at the beginning of the session of 1936-37. Among the departures from the requirements which have been in effect since 1922 are the following:

Credits toward a degree are no longer stated in terms of session-hours or term-hours. The new unit is the course, which is defined as the work covered in an organized, scheduled class, meeting at least three hours a week throughout the session. Science courses, with three hours of class work and six hours of laboratory work weekly, are counted as double courses. Twenty courses are required for a degree, and a student is normally expected to carry five courses a year.

The courses which are required of all applicants for degrees are one in English, two

in each of two foreign languages, one in mathematics and one, a double course, in science—a total of eight. A candidate for the degree of bachelor of arts must offer two courses in Greek or Latin; a candidate for the degree of bachelor of science must offer two courses in French or German. Not less than six of the eight required courses must be completed at least two years before graduation, and all must be completed at least one year before graduation. Unusually well-prepared students may be exempted from required courses, except in science, by passing qualifying examinations set at the beginning of the session, and students who present credit on admission for the equivalent of the first-year course in a foreign language are exempted from further requirement in that language if they pass the second-year course. Such exemption increases freedom of election, but does not reduce the total number of courses required for a degree.

Two years before graduation, a student must select as his field of concentration a major subject taught in one of the academic schools. Before registration he must present, as part of his plan of study for the next two years, a program of not less than five nor more than seven courses approved in writing by an official adviser for his major school. This program must include not less than three courses offered in the major school and not less than two courses in subjects related to the field of concentration.

The remaining courses needed to make up the required twenty are electives. In his second year, especially, the student is advised to elect courses with a view to exploring the academic fields in which he may wish to major. In general, introductory courses in the various fields which are not included in the required courses are recommended as electives in the second year.

Shortly before graduation a candidate must make a satisfactory standing in a final comprehensive examination on his field of



concentration, set by the faculty of his major school. This examination is in lieu of separate final examinations in all courses in the field of concentration, taken in the session of graduation, which the major school may include in it. It may be wholly a written examination, or partly written and partly oral.

It is hoped that the new requirements will insure a reasonably thorough mastery of at least one important field of knowledge, that they will bring about an acquaintance with the traditional liberal arts and sciences and that they will allow a proper measure of freedom in the pursuit of individual interests. It is also hoped that they will tend to de-emphasize the idea that a degree is made up of an accumulation of fragmentary and quickly forgotten credit-hours, and will encourage a more comprehensive and permanent mastery of subjects as wholes.

#### GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS FOR CLASSROOM USE

The National Geographic Society, of Washington, D. C., announces that publication of its illustrated Geographic News Bulletins for teachers will be resumed early in October. These bulletins are issued weekly, five bulletins to the weekly set, for thirty weeks of the school year. They embody pertinent facts for classroom use from the stream of geographic information that pours daily into The Society's headquarters from every part of the world. The bulletins are illustrated from The Society's extensive file of geographic photographs.

Teachers are requested to apply early for the number of these bulletins desired. They are obtainable only by teachers, librarians, college and normal students. Teachers may order bulletins in quantities for class use, to be sent to one address, but 25 cents must be remitted for each subscription. The bulletins are issued as a service, not for financial profit, by the National Geographic Society as a part of its program to diffuse ge-

ographic information. They give timely information about boundary changes, exploration, geographical developments, new industries, costumes and customs, and world progress in other lands.

#### THE INTRODUCTION OF FREE TEXTBOOKS IN THE SOUTH

An Associated Press dispatch states that some of the southern states are now furnishing free text-books to school children, while others are setting up rental systems. New buildings are going up through federal aid, and more students are enabled to attend school through jobs given their parents and the upper class students themselves.

Kentucky, Florida and Alabama furnish free text-books. A rental system has been adopted on a statewide scale in North Carolina.

Although not on a state-wide basis, the rental plan is being followed by several cities and counties in Georgia and Virginia. South Carolina is attempting to adopt such a program, but Governor Olin Johnson sees no funds to buy the initial books.

Alabama hopes to establish a free-text-book system in three years for the first three grades of grammar school. The plan calls for the purchase of first-grade books this fall for \$175,000; second-grade books next year for \$125,000, and third-grade books the following year for \$225,000, with \$200,000 being appropriated annually thereafter for replacement.

Dr. J. A. Keller, state superintendent of education of Alabama, is reported to have said that the plan should result in a sharp reduction of the 53 per cent. failures annually in the first grade. One of the chief causes for this high figure in his opinion is that only 30 per cent. of the pupils in the first grade had text-books.

Florida for years has furnished free text-books to public school pupils in the first six grades, and the 1935 legislature has extend-



ed the free books to pupils in all twelve grades. It costs the state about \$500,000 a year.

Five hundred thousand dollars was appropriated by the Kentucky Legislature for the fiscal year of 1935-36 for free books for lower grades. A similar amount was appropriated for the 1934-35 term, half of which has been spent.

The city of Atlanta, Ga., and Bibb County furnish free books to grammar school children. During the four years the city of Athens has operated on the book-rental system, patrons have been saved thousands of dollars and the school board has purchased thousands of new text-books and library books.

Parents in Roanoke and Alexandria, Va., have been saved large sums of money annually through the book-rental system. Danville is considering adopting the plan.

Through the rental plan, the Board of Education buys the books and then rents them to the students at one third the cost. The life of the book is estimated at three years.

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#### ENGLISH COUNCIL AT INDIANAPOLIS

The teaching of English in a changing curriculum is the general topic for the silver anniversary meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English to be held in Indianapolis November 28-30, according to announcement made by the president, Professor Charles Swain Thomas of Harvard University.

The opening session will be held at the Hotel Claypool, convention headquarters, at eight o'clock Thanksgiving Day evening. At the annual dinner on Friday evening, Dr. Claude M. Fuess, noted biographer and headmaster of Phillips Andover Academy, and Louis Untermeyer, the poet, will be the principal speakers. Carl Sandburg will be the guest of honor at the annual luncheon with which the convention will close on Saturday of the week-end.

The general session on Friday morning will be concerned with the new silent reading movement in the schools. Dr. Stella S. Center of the Theodore Roosevelt High School, New York City, will preside and will describe the federal project in silent reading carried out under her direction in her school.

A special session on Saturday will be devoted to discussion of the long-awaited report of the Curriculum Commission of the National Council, just published under the title, *An Experience Curriculum in English*. W. Wilbur Hatfield of Chicago Normal College, chairman of the Commission, will preside. Because of the unique importance of the Commission's work in outlining a pattern curriculum in English from kindergarten through high school this session will be of wide interest.

Sectional meetings on College Reading, Articulation, International Relations, Creative Writing, Departmental Organization, Journalism, Speech and Dramatics, Language Problems, Radio, Research, and other topics will occupy Friday afternoon.

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#### VIRGINIA SCHOOLS EMPLOY 42 GRADUATE LIBRARIANS

Fourteen high schools in Virginia which have never before had graduate librarians on their faculties will have them this fall. These librarians have completed a full year's study in Library Science either as part of the A.B. degree or as graduate work in addition to the A.B. degree. They have had professional courses in education and have majored in certain subjects in the high school curriculum which they will teach when they are not on duty in the library.

Graduate librarians will be employed for the first time this fall in the following high schools and counties: William Fleming, Roanoke; Callands, Pittsylvania; John Randolph, Cumberland; Kempsville, Princess Anne; Dickenson Memorial, Dickenson;



King George, King George; Callao, Northumberland; Goochland, Goochland; Varina and Glen Allen, Henrico; Amelia, Amelia; Rocky Mount, Franklin; Franktown-Nassawadox, Northampton; and Fairfax, Fairfax.

Graduate librarians will continue to be employed in: Whitmell, Pittsylvania, and Gretna, Pittsylvania; Troutville, Botetourt; Powhatan, Powhatan; South Norfolk, South Norfolk; Dumbarton Jr. and Westhampton, Henrico; Toano, James City; Waynesboro, Waynesboro; Andrew Lewis, Roanoke; Marion, Smyth; Carroll County Schools Library, Carroll; Martinsville, Henry; Crewe, Nottoway; Matthew Whaley, Williamsburg; Appomattox, Appomattox; Stevensville, King and Queen; Washington and Lee, Arlington; Newport News, Newport News; Thomas Jefferson, and John Marshall, Richmond; Hopewell, Hopewell; Oceana, Princess Anne; Kenbridge, Lunenburg; Disputanta, Prince George; Appalachia, Wise; George Washington, Danville; and Lane, Charlottesville.

#### NEW HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPER

*Highschool*, the first national newspaper in the educational field, is announced for publication this fall by *Scholastic*, American high-school student weekly.

National news of school and classroom for high-school teachers and principals will be printed every two weeks during the school year in *Highschool*. In addition to high-school news from all parts of the United States and foreign lands, and regular features of educational interest, the paper will also publish a series of study aids for English and Social Studies classrooms. Editorial offices will be at 250 E. 43rd St., New York, N. Y.

An uneducated person is one who stops studying when he graduates.—WILLIAM H. ALLEN.

#### SCHOOL LIBRARY PURCHASES

Ten counties and cities in Virginia purchased more than \$2,000 worth of books each for school libraries with state aid during the school year ending June 30, 1935, according to a recent report of C. W. Dickinson, Jr., State Director of Libraries and Textbooks of the State Board of Education. Total purchases from all schools amounted to \$100,434.40.

The ten divisions which purchased the largest number of books during the past session are as follows: Norfolk and Richmond Cities, and Roanoke, Chesterfield, Washington, Loudoun, Wise, Henrico, Carroll, and Pittsylvania Counties.

#### THE READING TABLE

THE CURRICULUM IN SPORTS. By Seward C. Staley. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co. 1935.

Organizing sports and teaching them according to modern educational ideas is no easy task. This book is a practical help in that matter. The way the activities are chosen and directed according to what are called Conduct and Control Objectives gives the teacher perspectives and purposeful unities which have been very much needed heretofore. These objectives serve as guides to the daily instructional activities of the teacher. The book includes several model semester curricula which seem to be workable.

HELEN MARBUT

THE PROGRESSIVE SPELLING SERIES. By J. G. Firman and G. E. Sherman. Newark, N. J.: Silver Burdett and Company. 1935. 16c each.

This is a series of books for grades 2 to 8. Each year's work beginning with the third year is grouped in 36 spelling units. Each unit has a basal list and two other lists. The words are graded on three levels based on frequency of use. By beginning with the basal or easiest list the child reaches his own level of spelling ability, and individual differences are supposed to be